

destroys himself, (4) God is tender in mercy and full of love.

Lesson Points

1. All secret sins are open to God.
2. Sin is sure to lead to slavery.
3. God leaves no sinner without excuse.
4. Idolatry is a most insidious sin.
5. God woos us by his promises.
6. Men perish because they will not live.
7. Unbelief is the one great sin of the day.
8. There is mercy for the returning sinner.

Helpful Illustrations

"They did secretly those things that were not right." When a wound in a soldier's foot refuses to heal the surgeon examines it very minutely. Each bone is there and in its place. There is no apparent cause for the inflammation, and yet the wound refuses to heal. The surgeon probes until his lancet comes into contact with a hard foreign substance. "Here it is," he says; "a bullet is lodged here. This must come out or the wound will not close." So secret sin works toward death.—*Spurgeon*.

Israel removed. It may be only a coincidence that Samaria, the place where Israel became a defeated and dispersed nation because they had neglected to worship the true God in spirit and in truth, was the place where Christ gave to the world his divine message concerning spiritual worship. How different the two scenes! "Then the king Assyria went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years." A few words—but what a picture of famine and suffering and hate and anguish! Only those who suffered at Sebastopol or Paris can realize the horrors in those few words. But look through these other words: "Then cometh he to a city of Samaria. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink." Here is a picture as full of beauty as a September afternoon.

Concerning the Use of Helps by Teachers

F. N. Peloubet.

There is one thing to do in the preparation of the Sunday-school lesson before helps are used at all, and that is to read carefully, and usually more than once, not only the lesson itself, but the whole section of the history which belongs with it and connects it with what goes before, as well as what comes after. Thus only can the lesson be seen in its true light.

It will not be taken apart from its connection, but as a part of a great whole; not as a piece of colored glass, but as part of a pictured window. Immediately after this the available helps should be studied, in order to obtain a correct interpretation and complete view of the facts.

I was taught when young that I must think out the whole for myself before I read what others had to say, in order to be original. But I found by experience that unless I got the facts correctly and in their true re-

lation, the thinking from them would be wrong. The man who taught a lesson on the duty of wise and pure conversation from the text, "Our conversation is in heaven," got farther from his text the more he thought in that line. The revised version has required not a few sermons to be divorced from the text from which they were originally written.

It is very unfortunate for a teacher to have an "acute attack of inadequate information" and then, standing on that view of the text, fly his kite of practical application far away in the air.

Moreover, knowledge of the facts and of what others have thought is an aid and not a hindrance to originality. If one is not original with knowledge, he cannot be so without knowledge. The only difference is that the more he knows the more material his original genius has to work with.

Who would employ an architect or an artist who had not studied all that others had learned and done?

The elder Professor Silliman was listening to his son, a professor in the same department, when someone just behind him whispered: "He beats the old gentleman."

The elder professor turned around and said: "He ought to; he stands on my shoulders."

We see farther when we stand on others' shoulders, and our eyes are just as keen there as elsewhere. If we are blind or short-sighted, we can see in neither place. "He that is crazy in Poland will not find his wits in Rome."

There are many new things coming to our knowledge which throw new light on the Scriptures. They are coming from Assyria and from Egypt. They come from new-found manuscripts, from monuments, and from ancient history. They come from scientific study of history. They come from many sources. The teacher ought to know these things; but it is almost impossible for most to search them out for themselves. The writers of lesson helps, with every advantage, gather them together for the teachers. Besides this, there are many things that require the aid of experts to rightly interpret.

In traveling abroad I have used two plans. In one case I found out all I could for myself. I used what historical knowledge I had for places and what little art knowledge I possessed for the picture galleries. And if one knows enough and has unlimited time at his disposal, he can do very well on this plan.

But how few do know enough! I missed a great many things until I had first used the other plan—that of being personally conducted by those who knew the history and could point out the best pictures and the best things in them.

Applying the illustration, it may be said that Lesson Helps are to personally conduct those who have not time to study everything for themselves.

Generally it is better to use more than

one "Help," or at least the ones that bring in facts and truths from many directions. Most ordinary commentaries are something like the Irish jaunting cars, in which the passengers sit back to back, and each row sees only the part of the landscape which it faces. All the other side is behind and out of sight. We need to read enough to gain a glimpse of every side and phase of the subject.

The teacher does not use a "Help" well when he reads much from it to the class. He must digest his material and make it a part of himself. It should come to his mind in vivid pictures, which he can hold up before his class; or as truth, which by meditation comes fresh from his own soul.

The main use of "Helps" after a clear knowledge of the facts is found in their suggestiveness. They are to awaken thought. They are to kindle the soul. Illustrations are given, not because they can always be used, but because they suggest other illustrations. Hence the best illustrations are not stories, or usually not even historical facts, but those which shed light on some principle and are ever suggesting others of a like nature. For nature, being the work of God, is full of illustrations of the Word of God.

I often refer to books where certain excellent illustrations can be found, instead of giving them in full, in order that the teachers who have time may look them up and thus use them with greater freshness and power.

Another way of using helps is to draw from the practical suggestions those best adapted to the class to be taught. A wide range of them is given, as suggested by many writers on the subject, and some one or other will be helpful to each scholar or will suggest others that will. A lesson without the practical application is a cannon without the ball, powder without the spark, an engine without its cars, or seeds that are never planted.

Thus the true use of helps is:—

To furnish the facts.

To learn them correctly.

To see them from all sides.

To digest them and make them our own.

To awaken thought.

To suggest new truths.

To suggest new applications of old truths.

To suggest methods of teaching.

To give inspiration and interest in the subject.

To begin early in the week so that the suggestions in the helps may have time to awaken new thoughts and new views of truth.

They are not for use *in* the class.

They are not substitutes for thinking and study.

When you say, "Lead us not into temptation," you must in good earnest mean to avoid in your daily conduct those temptations which you have already suffered from.